

Minutes of the North Carolina Charter School Review Board

State Board Room 755, Department of Public Instruction

November 12, 2024

9 AM

Attendance – CSRБ Members	
Alex Granados- (nonvoting) Dr. Rita Haire Dr. John Eldridge Alex Quigley Hilda Parlér Dr. Shelly Shope - Remote	Eric Sanchez - Absent Bruce Friend Dave Machado Todd Godbey Dr. Bartley Danielsen Stephen Gay
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Ashley Baquero, Director Joseph Letterio, Consultant - Remote Melanie Rackley, Consultant Jenna Cook, Consultant Dr. Natasha Norins, Consultant Dr. Brandi Gill, Consultant Nicky Niewinski, Asst. Director - Absent Julie Whetzel, Consultant Megan Carter, Consultant	<i>CSRБ Attorney</i> Steven Walker <i>SBE Attorney</i> Allison Schafer - Absent <i>Teacher/Principal of Year</i> Lee Haywood - TOY Sarena Fuller - POY

Recording of November 12 CSRБ Meeting: [LINK TO YOUTUBE VIDEO](#)

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance and NC Flag Salute Mr. Bruce Friend

Mission and Ethics Statement:

- Mission and Ethics Statement, Mr. Bruce Friend, Board Chair
 - Dr. Eldridge recused from Granite Charter School

Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

Motion: Ms. Hilda Parlér motioned to approve agenda for November Meeting

Second: Dr. Rita Haire

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

Motion: Dr. Rita Haire motioned to approve October 2024 minutes.

Second: Mr. Todd Godbey

Vote: Unanimous

Passed Failed

November Charter School Review Board Meeting

Amendments: Ms. Julie Whetzel, OCS Consultant

Nalanda RTO 2025 – Relocation Over 5-Miles

- Ms. Whetzel introduced the amendment to relocate. She noted the school’s previously proposed location and where it would be following the move. She also went over the history of the application, information on delays, and other information regarding impact to the district.
- Ms. Parlér asked if they had a secretary.
 - A school leader noted who the secretary was.
- Dr. Haire asked if they had an original location vs. a zip code. The school leader said it was just a zip code and this is now a permanent facility.
- Dr. Haire asked if the 7 miles was from ‘one zip code to another’ or if it was from a ‘picked out spot to another picked out spot’. The school leader said it was from the border of a zip code to another border. The school leader and Dr. Haire went over more specifics on where the new location is, and other things regarding the distance between the two.
- Dr. Eldridge asked for a summary on the impact on student enrollment. The school leader said they don’t anticipate changes in their enrollment and that they are moving into a former school facility.
- Dr. Haire asked if they are adding more beyond K-8 after year 5 and the school leader said that they hope to expand in the future but only got approved for K-8. The school leader and Dr. Haire went into detail further on enrollment numbers and grades served.
- Mr. Machado asked how many original board members are still on the board. The school leader said all board members in the original application were still there (3) and they added more since then.
- Dr. Haire asked if Charter Success Partners is doing anything else besides marketing and the school said no and they signed a 3-year contract this weekend.

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge motioned to approve Nalanda’s relocation over 5-miles amendment request.

Second: Dr. Rita Haire

Vote: Unanimous

• Passed Failed

Crossnore RTO 2025 – Curriculum, Enrollment, Calendar, School Day

- Ms. Whetzel introduced and explained the several amendments for this school. She went over the history of the application, information on delays, and other information regarding impact to the district. She then noted that OCS normally would approve some of these, but since they are in RTO they wanted to bring it before the board.
- Mr. Friend commented that they normally would only focus in on the curriculum as opposed to all the things presented.
- Dr. Haire noted some concerns with the curriculum change and school day change citing things brought up in their initial application. She also noted a name change, and Ms. Baquero stated OCS hasn't received a formal request for a name change but that when they did, OCS could approve that on its own. She asked why there are such a large number of changes from the original application. Dr. Eldridge agreed.
 - A school leader / the principal of the school said that those changes came about because of her vision with the school. She said as the school leader she wanted some flexibility in the curriculum to make it more research based. She then touched on the reasoning for other changes.
 - Another school leader added that they are changing the name due to a large donation and that the other changes are to help address concerns brought up after approval.
 - Dr. Eldridge asked what curriculum they went with. The school principal said they haven't narrowed that down yet. She went in detail on what they were thinking about.
 - Dr. Haire said they appreciate the school coming before them just to ask for flexibility when others just implement it themselves. Dr. Eldridge commented that they need to make sure they teach the teachers. The school leader noted that they are having PD 2 weeks prior to school starting to train teachers.
 - Dr. Eldridge asked about the name change and if they could put a first name / another variation to avoid conflict with a similarly named charter school. A school board member said that is something they could go back and have a conversation with the family.
- Mr. Godbey mentioned that large capital donations normally go to name a building not the entire school.
- Ms. Parlér noted their enrollment was only at 180 students and asked why. A board member noted that it's based on the model of the school and the population they serve. She also noted there was a similar school they modeled theirs from.

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge motioned to approve Crossnore's amendment request as presented.

Second: Dr. Rita Haire

Discussion:

- Mr. Friend said that he has some concerns about not having a curriculum picked out but still offered support. Mr. Danielsen noted that the school may be underperforming due to the population it aims to serve. He said that the board needs to reconsider those renewal standards, and this school is a great example of why. Mr. Friend noted they'll talk about that tomorrow. Mr. Machado reiterated Mr. Friend's concerns and comments.

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed
- Failed

Thomas Academy – ADM Under 80

- Ms. Whetzel introduced the amendment to decrease their ADM under 80. She also noted noncompliance issues that the school currently faces; where the students they serve reside; and other details pertaining to their school. Mr. Friend asked if the school is considered an alternative school and if they originally requested for waiving the 80-student requirement. Ms. Whetzel confirmed.
- Mr. Friend commented that the first thing that comes to mind is the 80-student minimum and cited last year’s school that was forced to shut down after failing to hit that guideline. He said he believes this is different citing the alternative school model and asked if the school gets students predominantly in the fall semester or throughout the school year. A school leader said throughout the year.
- Dr. Eldridge commented that he believes the statute allows alternative schools to be below 80 and Mr. Friend cited the statute.
- Dr. Haire stated the statute is really to help out with financial concerns and that it isn’t feasible to support a school at that small of a population. She said she doesn’t know how much the Boys and Girls Club provides and that she didn’t receive any documentation pertaining to financial status.
- Mr. Friend asked them about the budget and what number works for them. Mr. Murphy – President of Boys and Girls Homes of NC – said that he views this as a temporary issue. He said that they had renovations in the cottages (Mold Remediation) that pushed their ADM below 80. Now that two are back open (4 still under construction) they project an additional 30 students to join the school. He said that they will be getting back up to 90/100 by the end of the year. He reiterated their desire to get above that threshold and be in noncompliance. He also said their financial backer is still planning to support them.
 - He and Mr. Friend discussed demand vs. space and Mr. Murphy said that they have the demand it’s just strictly due to lack of space.
- Mr. Machado asked OCS if they’re on any financial noncompliance and Ms. Baquero said no. She then explained what is putting them on noncompliance at the moment. Dr. Eldridge said that the Boys and Girls Homes of NC is filling gaps until the ADM hits 80 and Mr. Murphy said yes.

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge motioned to approve Thomas Academy’s ADM under 80 amendment request.

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

KIPP – Consolidate Gaston/Halifax campuses

- Ms. Whetzel introduced the amendment. She stated the two schools wish to consolidate and they share the same mission and are within 15 miles of one another. She shared the mission statement for the school and cited some of the reasons the two schools wanted to consolidate. She then went into details about resources, services, and ADM adjustments to each school that would take place should the consolidation go through. She introduced a representative from KIPP who presented some slides to the board.
- The representative of the school introduced himself and outlined the desire to consolidate. He mentioned they didn’t not hit enrollment numbers over the course of the school’s being open; and gave more of a history of the two schools. He showed where students came from and noted that they

look almost identical for the two different schools. He also touched on census and demographic data that highlighted a significant population decline in the two counties they primarily serve. He did the same for parents/staff-aged populations as well.

- He concluded by asking CSRБ to consolidate so they can better use the resources, maintain the resources they have, and better serve the students they have in the two campuses.
- Mr. Friend asked what communication has been with the staff and the school representative stated he has been communicating with the staff multiple times over the last several weeks. He said that staff seems to understand as they see what’s happening in the communities they live in each day. He said that it does add some logistical concerns for staff but that those would be sorted out in the next 8 months.
- Mr. Friend asked if there were any athletic changes. The school representative said there have already been some consolidation for sports in the middle school department and noted they do have land available to possibly expand the Halifax school and the sports facilities at that campus.
- Dr. Haire asked if they have board members present and if they could touch on board member concerns (citing the lack of information in the minutes). The school representative outlined the representation on the board and stated this was a discussion two years in the making. He then outlined some of the concerns parents/community board members had during those discussions. He said it’s his belief that parents/students would come to the new school.
- Mr. Machado asked how the charter situation would work. Ms. Baquero outlined how that would work between the two schools and said that with Gaston’s renewal being up in 2026 that this was a good time since this allows OCS to begin their internal review with this in mind.
- Dr. Eldridge asked if this doesn’t impact anything with sports/the High School Athletic Association. The school representative stated he would have to check. Dr. Eldridge recommended circling up on that. He said that he loves this type of presentation and said that it makes their work easier.

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge motioned to approve KIPP’s amendment request to consolidate Gaston/Halifax.

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

Introduction to 2024 Charter Application Interviews: Ms. Melanie Rackley, OCS Consultant

- Ms. Rackley introduced the schools before the board in the 2026 cohort and gave a brief overview of the application process and statutes pertaining to the board’s decisions.

Granite Charter Academy - Standard, 2026

Introduction

- Ms. Melanie Rackley introduced the Board of Directors to the School; as well as their mission, number of students, and other details pertaining to their application. She also introduced the choices the CSRБ had regarding this application and other details regarding length and time of discussion per section. She also highlighted the demographics of the county the school is proposed to open in giving census data on the region.

Opening Statement by the School

- A member of the board came up and introduced himself and gave his credentials and life story. He touched on some of the programs the school planned to offer and how it would benefit the community. He introduced some of the school leaders – including Dr. Eldridge – who would be assisting them in their mission and acknowledged that the community at large being fully involved in this school. He shared survey data and other things that proved community interest/demand. He also introduced the curriculums they are going to be using; noted where the proposed facility is; and highlighted other services provided such as transportation, nutrition, and more.

Questions/Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Mr. Friend asked what from the past applications before the CSRБ was different/what has changed from those applications.
 - Mr. Friend stated in the past it was K-8 and now it's K-12.
- Mr. Machado asked about letter of recommendations and how old those are citing some of them referencing K-8. He also commented on the weighted lottery and how the board members must live in NC. He asked for comment on the transportation plan.
- Ms. Parlér asked about services for special needs students. She also asked about the facility and how they're looking for that. She asked what percentage of the weighted lottery they will achieve, and will they serve SafeServe*. She also asked about CTE engagement and one of the letters saying that they'll be in Chapel Hill but the application saying Chatham County.
- Mr. Friend asked about personnel concerns that some people have in the budget such as a school counselor.
- Dr. Haire commented on the time it has been between their applications and how it has greatly improved.

Answers from the School Board

- A board member commented on the real estate question. He noted that Chatham County has zip codes in multiple jurisdictions and their proposed location is splitting a zip code with Pittsboro and Chapel Hill but will be in Chatham County.
- Dr. Haire confirmed there's now 10 board members.
- Another board member mentioned the amount they have in reserve and said they did plan to budget some funds for a school counselor while also giving them some flexibility to spend on items that students or staff need.
- Another board member – citing her expertise in Title 1 schools – stated the needs of EDS students in Chatham County will be addressed and the CTE program and other curriculum will be aiding them in maintaining their blue-collar lifestyle and filling jobs that are needed in this area.
- Another board member mentioned they will be advertising to the community on the fact they have a weighted lottery and that's because low income and Hispanic populations are prevalent in Chatham County.
- The Board President stated there were a lot of improvements made to their application. She said they really worked to add K-4 to the CTE curriculum and the board behind them is incredibly strong.
- Another board member introduced himself and gave his credentials and experience leading schools across multiple states. He touched on the transportation plan and bus stops that they plan to have. He stated they are going to try and inspire young women to get into the construction industry because it is the fairest pay between the genders. Another board member mentioned that it will be in their bylaws to have all members of the board reside in NC. She added that all letters of support have been verified and county leaders and others are working with the 501c3 to help promote and support the staff and the school's mission.

- Mr. Machado asked about the waitlist sharing and the other charter school in the area. A board member came up and stated that due to high demand in the area they in fact are the biggest cheerleader of opening up a new school with this type of skillset.
- Dr. Danielsen asked if they can do a gender-based weighted lottery due to his surprise over the large discrepancy between men and women in the construction industry. A board member came up and said the community stops are important since some may stop in the housing projects.
- Mr. Quigley asked what is in the budget for the facility. After figuring out what it was, he mentioned that the percent of revenue going to facility is a bit higher than average on charter schools across NC. Other board members and CSRБ members mentioned potential grants and programs that they could use to help get money and grants to help with handling the land costs.
- Another board member said development of the facility is already done citing his experience working with landowners in the area to assist the schools in the area. Mr. Quigley stated he thinks they are under-projecting on revenues since they may be getting a lot more funding from both the State and Federal governments. He commended the strength of the board but said they really need to go back and look at the interest rate and other things related to the facility expenses because they may undercut their program like some EMOs do.

Closing Statement

- A board member shared that the people and community behind this board will make this school go well. She stated capital is the least of the concerns for the board and noted they are going to do the work to get the staff they need and carry out what they intend to do. She stated they cannot waste time and need to get the ball rolling. She reiterated on her fellow board members experience and stated the people who have a lot of resources and are willing to help make a change.

Deliberation by CSRБ

- Ms. Parlér asked about the capital and who is behind them and asked what their relation is with SABA. One of the board members said the facility that SABA had was the backup plan. Another member said they have two anonymous financial donors who are ready to give to the board.
- Mr. Friend – citing his previous concerns about personnel and other budgetary concerns – said that those things in the end are inconsequential and will be figured out before they open up. He said the board is super strong and he sees the need since it is down the road from his school.
- Mr. Quigley stated he likes this board since they are a board that is based in the community (and not run by a management company). He said if they can get the money to the table, they can get things rolling and the rest is words. He said this is an example of people who really want it coming back if they get denied and stated they should use this board’s strength as a guide to other boards that come before them.

Motion: Mr. Bruce Friend motioned to approve Granite Charter Academy’s charter application

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Discussion:

- Mr. Machado stated the need is there and thanked them for coming back again. He said that he is supportive of this and appreciative of them making all the changes from previous applications.
- Dr. Danielsen said that he too is excited about this board and this school is largely birthed from a business community that is coming together to build something they see will help fill a need for their county. He thinks this will be very good for public education.

- Dr. Haire stated this application was very thorough and went above and beyond in terms of depth and quality.

Vote: Unanimous Dr. John Eldridge recused.

- Passed Failed

Renewals 2025 Introduction and Data Review: Ms. Jenna Cook, OCS Consultant

- Ms. Cook introduced the renewal process.
 - She touched on what OCS does in this process and outlined the steps done per month / per year. Stated year 1 is heavy on requirements from the school and year 2 is heavy on requirements from OCS/CSRБ. Stated if a school does not receive a 10-year renewal based on statute, they present in front of the board. She also outlined how schools were placed in a certain renewal category.
 - Also went over the schools and guidelines that the board must follow.

Renewal Presentation and Interviews:

1. 43D Achievement Charter Academy

Introduction/Presentation

- Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and the leaders of the school. Presented growth and performance data and enrollment statistics over the last three years for the school and any compliance issues that were noted in their audits.
- The Board Chair introduced himself and the other school leaders present today. He continued by addressing the recommendations OCS gave in their site visit and how they've remedied them.
- The School Leader introduced herself and began her segment of the presentation by touching on the mission statement, performance data and growth data over the past 3 years. She said that the trends show returning students will slowly matriculate into their system and will also improve in scores. She also touched on the comparability data for each school.
- She then transitioned to a slide on community engagement and support, and culture of students at the school. She mentioned some challenges the school is facing such as enrollment concerns due to COVID and increased attrition of families that do go to the school. She also mentioned that addressing the need for EC support is a challenge and other trends with diversity they've been working on. She gave specific percentages on demographics. She continued by noting that teacher turnover was high after they required licensure and that maintaining those teachers is a challenge. Finally, she noted that data-driven models and other programs are being utilized to help create improvement plans / performance scores.
- She concluded her presentation by saying that growth in the area is large and they've seen that growth as well. She stated she knows they are in the 3-year category but asked if they could consider a 5-year renewal.
- Mr. Friend and Ms. Baquero discussed when these schools would be voted on.

Questions from CSRБ

- Ms. Parlér asked where the minutes were from the last few years and the Board Chair said they are on the website and explained how she could access them.

- Mr. Machado asked if they are in the new facility listed in the slides and they said no but working to get there. Mr. Machado asked about their EC Director and the principal explained their EC staff and noted that the chair is technically part-time but does everything.
- Dr. Haire asked about turnover and attrition rates and several school leaders noted they are working with parents to get them more involved and engaged in their child’s education since parents that are more involved are more likely to stay.
- Ms. Haywood asked if there’s anyway to avoid the 2–3-year training curve that it takes when hiring new teachers. The principal explained the ways that the school trains and helps ease the transition for new teachers.

2. 32C Community School of Digital and Visual Arts

Introduction / Presentation

- Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and the leaders of the school. Presented growth and performance data and enrollment statistics over the last three years for the school and any compliance issues that were noted in their audits/inspections by OCS.
- The principal of the school introduced himself and the other board members present. He gave an overview of the school, including demographic data, and the mission of the school. He also gave a brief history of the school and their desire to make it into a STEAM school.
- He noted they have met academic growth each of the last three years. He stated they are looking to improve that performance grade but their black population is more proficient than Durham and the State (when compared to one another). He touched on some targeted interventions that they implemented and its impact on the 2023-2024 school performance grade.
- He continued by listing some of their achievements for 2023-2024 such as implementing their goal to make the school a STEAM school, create a CTE program and a youth empowerment summit for grades 5-8.
- He then outlined their goals for the future including the goals for enrollment, proficiency – by category - and overall schoolwide goals (including goals to increase social-emotional learning and family/community engagement). He touched on ways that he and his fellow board members were working to address and fulfill these goals.
- The Board Chair introduced himself and thanked the principal for the strong success his school has seen in the strong performance growth scores. He addressed some of the compliance concerns that were raised and said the auditor will have an audit and the minutes will be handled as well. He stated that turnover is what really caused a lot of these issues but as they fill these positions they will get out of non-compliance.

Questions from the CSRБ

- Mr. Friend asked who is doing the financial audit and a board member shared the name of the company. After discussion with the treasurer on when audits for the last several years would be completed, Mr. Friend asked if the audit hadn’t been submitted because it didn’t exist, and the treasurer confirmed this.
- Mr. Friend asked why the board minutes weren’t up on the website and the board chair stated there was high staff turnover and their website for the last year was being updated. He said that it was a lot of change and that he was working with the staff to get through it all.
 - Mr. Friend said that it doesn’t take a year to get minutes onto a website and that it appears he is bucking the responsibility onto the staff when he as the board chair is

responsible for governing the school. The Board Chair highlighted the process they went through when they did have staff and said they will be working to get them up after downloading the recordings of the meeting and getting them uploaded from there.

- Mr. Machado said that he was concerned about the operation of the school and said that a school that was opened in the beginning – back in 1998 – shouldn't really have these issues. The Board Chair stated the staff shortages and the fact the LEA failed to fulfill their duties in some regard really compounded their issues. He said that this is just an anomaly.
- Dr. Haire asked if there was a notification to the school about the financial noncompliance and he said yes. Dr. Haire said it was concerning that no action was taken even after the notice was given.
- Dr. Eldridge stated the experiences he's had shows they really need to separate the roles of the board vs. the roles of the school so they don't step on one another and hinder the operation of the school.
- Mr. Friend said that yes, he is being tough, but they are impressed with the growth. He said however that the board has the charter not the principal or the staff and that these issues need to be addressed come January or he will be forced to vote between 3-year and non-renewal.

3. 32D Kestrel Heights School

Introduction / Presentation

- Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and the leaders of the school. Presented growth and performance data and enrollment statistics over the last three years for the school and any compliance issues that were noted in their audits.

Presentation from the Board

- The Board chair introduced herself and the members of the board present today. She touched on the importance of their school and introduced the Executive Director (ED).
- The ED went over a summary of data from the last few years. She touched on the school's performance grade and other metrics and stated they show successful implementation of interventions. She continued by touching on growth and other data.
 - She also touched on composite growth and growth in the College and Career Ready cohort immediately following COVID and mentioned the challenges with retaining students in that return-to-school environment.
 - She then highlighted comparability data to other DPS schools and when compared to their local area they are doing quite well.
 - The ED then discussed some positive stories such as a new building unifying their elementary school campus, increased professional development and closing opportunity gaps for at risk students by implementing a revamped transportation plan.
 - She mentioned there are challenges such as attracting new students when there's a lot of competition and a shrinking elementary population. She stated they are relatively well-staffed and that their evaluations are strong/sound.

Questions and Comments from the Board

- Mr. Machado thanked and congratulated them on their performance.
- Ms. Parlér asked about their small groups and the ED gave the number of people in the small groups and that during that time, all teachers are implementing action plans. She also added that

they are also working with higher risk students. She and Ms. Parlér also noted that 40% of teachers were licensed.

- Ms. Parlér asked about electives for middle schools and a school leader outlined the electives offered to the students and certain pathways that students have the option to take. She said that in the end they take on average of 8 elective courses a year.
- Mr. Friend asked why they didn't get put in the 5-year renewal and Ms. Cook said it was because of the CLP designation. Other board members applauded the school on their growth and comparability to the district. The ED said that it was based on the work of the board and the school staff.

4. 13C A.C.E. Academy

Introduction / Presentation

- Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and the leaders of the school. Presented growth and performance data and enrollment statistics over the last three years for the school and any compliance issues that were noted in their audits.

Presentation from the Board

- The founding board member introduced herself and the other board members present. Another board member touched on the data for their school such as information on school performance data, compliance with DPI/OCS requirements, community engagement, grants and more. Another board member noted that the 'E' stands for entrepreneurship, and they have helped foster students that have created pretty successful businesses. She also noted they provide free meals and other things for their students.
- She transitioned by noting the demographics they serve and the communities they are in. She touched on the transportation plan they have and comparability data to schools that serve the same demographics as them. Another board member outlined those schools and again noted they are comparable to those other schools.
- A board member gave an overview of the reading and math proficiency scores and noted hires that they have made to correct certain shortcomings.

Questions from the CSRБ

- Mr. Friend asked how often they met and how many board members. Mr. Friend and the board discussed where the minutes are. Mr. Friend said he'd recommend looking back to make sure that's there.
- Ms. Parlér asked if there are any males on the board and the board member said that the chair is a male and that he couldn't be here due to taking care of family.
- Ms. Haywood asked them to share about their staff and the board member gave an overview of the staff such as qualifications they have and how they are trained in the curriculum.
- Dr. Haire asked what the 50% growth was over the last 10 years. A board member went over the growth data but said that she hasn't had the data from the last 10 years on the top of her head.
- Mr. Friend asked how many senior school leaders have been with the school since its inception and how many board members are the same. The board member gave who was still on the board/leadership teams.

5. 53C Rising Leaders Academy

Introduction / Presentation

- Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and the leaders of the school. Presented growth and performance data and enrollment statistics over the last three years for the school and any compliance issues that were noted in their audits.

Presentation from the School

- The Board chair introduced himself and the members present today. The school principal began the presentation by looking at the number of disadvantaged students they serve. She also highlighted the academic growth, proficiency scores, and overall growth during the last 3 years.
 - She highlighted the school's restorative justice model they use and noted they have no compliance issues in financial or governance.
 - She mentioned they are looking to implement a strategic plan and went into detail on each of the 5 prongs of that strategic plan and with that they request a 5-year renewal.

Questions/Discussion from the CSRБ

- Mr. Machado asked if they are K-8 and if they had a preschool. The Board chair said they are K-8 and no preschool.
- Dr. Haire asked what the number of students was and asked why it declined so much. The Board chair said that the leadership change and losing the 21st century grant caused a large decline in enrollment.
- Ms. Parlér asked about Community Circle and the Board Chair explained that program.
- Mr. Machado asked if they've ever thought about reinstituting before/after school care since there's a large demand in the area. A board member said that they are discussing something like that but the financial cost is too great at the moment. He and Mr. Machado confirmed they are in the same facility.
- Dr. Eldridge asked if the board members were the same and the member said that there are 2 new board members.
- Mr. Godbey asked what other strategies they are doing to boost enrollment and the board member outlined some of the events they were doing in the community to boost marketing.
- Ms. Haywood asked about EDS population and asked if they do exit surveys, and the board member stated they do and that all input comes from the community.
- Mr. Quigley echoed Dr. Eldridge in saying Ms. Dixon was a good leader.

6. 60K Charlotte Secondary School

Introduction / Presentation

- Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and the leaders of the school. Presented growth and performance data and enrollment statistics over the last three years for the school and any compliance issues that were noted in their audits.

Presentation by the Board

- Ms. Miller – the head of school – introduced herself and the members of the board/school leadership team present today.
 - She began by outlining some of the school and subgroup trends that were worth noting when looking at subgroup data, including proficiency and growth rates in different subgroups. She then gave some academic goals and strategies such as eliminating opportunity gaps and improving school performance by 2027 and noted they are implementing professional development and taking time to analyze student data.
 - She touched on some of the areas they can improve upon – such as increasing enrollment, diversifying funding and improving their school report card grade to a ‘C’ or better for the future.
 - She concluded her presentation by highlighting some of the things they have seen working in their school and parents/the community have been supportive. She noted they don’t compare to CMS but they have experienced significant growth. She mentioned how some of their students have internships and other roles/mentorships set up as they graduate/progress through their school.
 - She also showed the board a separate slide of what teachers do every Friday to dive into the data for their students.

Questions from the CSRБ

- Mr. Machado asked where they were in Charlotte and how many years has she been there. The head of school shared their location and mentioned this was her first year. She and Mr. Machado discussed the number of graduating seniors and the graduation rate of 92%.
 - Other CSRБ members asked about the expanded schedule and the school leader said they start at 8:30 and this allows for targeted corrections in the moment. She and Dr. Haire discussed whether other schools do a 4-day school week and Dr. Haire commented that it may be the only school in the state.
 - The school leader discussed some of the roles that her assistants do and their experience before coming to the school. She stated they are intentional in sitting down with their teachers and in the end they are happier since they have an extra day with family.
- Ms. Haywood asked what leadership/coaching new teachers are exposed to for interventions. The school leader touched on how it’s all tied into the data and gave more specific examples on professional development.
- Dr. Haire asked about enrollment, and they said 166.
- Mr. Friend again noted they need to post minutes and add more meat to the bones of those minutes.

7. 61J Lakeside Charter Academy

Introduction / Presentation

- Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and the leaders of the school. Presented growth and performance data and enrollment statistics over the last three years for the school and any compliance issues that were noted in their audits.

Presentation by the School Board

- A board member introduced himself and the board members present. He stated the last year and a half has been turbulent due to losing a strong and stable leader. The school leader introduced himself and gave his credentials.
 - He began his presentation by touching on the last 3 years of academic data for their school, mentioning comparability data in academic growth and proficiency scores. He noted trends in the academic data that were both positive and negative.
 - He continued by sharing check-in data from this year and explained the numbers he has gotten this year. He noted trends seen in this data and that students have been getting at least 40% of the questions correct in these check-ins. He mentioned that he is fully staffed and the culture of the school in students and staff have really turned around for the better.
 - He transitioned by noting seven steps they can take to improve their school, and introduced some of the support staff they had to help implement these goals. He has said that their teachers are bought in and committed to this growth and success and the board is working with the school leadership and teachers to implement targeted interventions to students who are at risk of falling behind.

Questions from the CSRБ

- Dr. Haire asked if they've identified practices to help students grow and succeed. The school leader mentioned some of those strategies and noted that his lack of experience is what prompted him to have conversations with students and teachers.
- Dr. Eldridge asked what their math curriculum was, and the board mentioned their curriculum. He also confirmed they are doing NC Check-Ins and they said yes.
- Ms. Haywood asked what percent licensed teachers and they gave the percentage. She asked if they've looked at the teacher working conditions survey and created action plans based from that and the board said yes.

Bright Scholars- Standard, 2026

- Ms. Melanie Rackley reminded the board on the process they had to follow and then introduced the Board of Directors to the School; as well as their mission, number of students, and other details pertaining to their application. She also introduced the choices the CSRБ had regarding this application.

Opening Statement from the Board

- The Board chair introduced himself and the other board members on the team that could and couldn't be there in-person. He began his presentation by explaining the 'Why'. He said that the other schools that are low performing made them think they can do better; and, their combined work in that district is what gives them the experience to really be successful.
- Another board member came up and explained the goals of the school along with the mission statement and how they plan to serve students with things like a small class size. She stressed they will continue to work with the community and that their passion for the community as educators is what sets them apart from other schools/boards.

Questions/Deliberation from CSRБ

- Ms. Parlér asked about the transportation plan and the mention of vans.
- Dr. Eldridge asked about the numbers and asked if it had to do with having a temporary facility.

- Mr. Friend noted he had some questions about the budget
- Dr. Danielsen said he was concerned with the lack of business experience seeing that running a school is a business. Mr. Friend asked if they looked at other school budgets when putting their budget together.
- Dr. Haire asked about where they are going to find the resources to fulfill the salaries and other things listed in the budget.
- Mr. Friend asked who the finance person is on the board and if they had assistance putting the budget together. The Board chair noted that he and his wife are MBAs and that they handled large sums of money and grant applications before. He also noted another member who runs a business also provides input.
 - Mr. Friend asked if they consulted other schools, and the board commented that they worked with several schools and a leadership group to help draft the budget.
- Mr. Friend asked about no school counselor being in the budget. A board member stated they have positions such as school leader but that they would be wearing many hats. Mr. Friend noted that is very difficult and the school leader said they are wearing a lot of hats but they have to be lean in the first year of their budget.
 - Mr. Friend and the school leader went over some other individual line items in the budget and noted particularly that the technology budget is very low for the number of kids and the grades of kids they intend to serve.
 - Mr. Friend asked if they are giving every student a Chromebook and they said initially they hope to have a grade set of Chromebooks with the goal of getting every student a Chromebook by year 5. Dr. Eldridge and the board member confirmed the technology would be used as a supplement.
- Dr. Eldridge said that to be a person who is the registrar and other roles is a very heavy job and he'd recommend looking at that. He noted there are off-site positions that can assist in filling those types of roles for cheap / wouldn't require benefits.
- Ms. Haywood stated the Dean of Students implementing discipline shouldn't be the counselor since that is a conflict of interest as well. The school leader agreed.
- Mr. Godbey asked for more clarification on the transportation plan and a particular staffer and her role as a daycare teacher. The school leader said that is her current role and she would leave that position but they don't have a school now so she can't leave.
- Mr. Friend said there's a lot of competition in the area and asked for their pitch. The school leader gave her pitch citing their focus not just on fulfilling addition and multiplication but focusing heavily on preparing the students to be successful in the community. She also added that their teachers are going to be well trained. The Board chair noted they have a lot of community engagement that really helps develop and highlight that social-emotional development.
- Another board member introduced herself and noted her extensive experience in the education space. She said they are going to focus on teaching the students to live in the communities the school is serving and their experience working in those more poor districts will help guide them and make them successful.
- Dr. Haire asked if she founded a previous school and she and Dr. Haire discussed how that school had to go away due to the parents not being able to pay the tuition.
- Mr. Godbey asked who would work for the school/become staff. The Board Vice-Chair said she'd volunteer for the school, the Board chair said he'd be available whenever needed but has no interest in working at a Charter School.
- Ms. Parlér asked how many passengers and how many vans. The Board said 2 15-passanger vans.
- Mr. Machado asked for a location and the board chair gave where they were planning to be. Mr. Machado noted there is a ton of competition in that area.
- Dr. Eldridge said that vans won't work and to look at sites that are getting rid of minibuses as that would help them out.

- Mr. Friend asked for a brief overview of their facility plans. The school leader outlined their desire to start in the church and in the future either buy land or renovate an older facility. Dr. Eldridge asked if they have an educational certificate of occupancy, and the board said it does have sprinklers and will work. Mr. Friend asked if they are renting the church or if they're giving it at no cost and they said that the church built the building with the plan there would be a school there so they would be renting out per classroom/office space.

Closing Statements

- The Board chair touched on upward mobility and noted the zip code they plan to serve is one of the worst for upward mobility. He stressed they want to serve that population and give them the opportunity to grow and move upward.
- The Board vice-chair said that the experience is there and despite the lack of business experience, there are people who have financial/business experience. She stressed that charter schools are supposed to be different and innovative.

Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Dr. Haire noted that they have 2 MBAs on the board but hoped they are bringing financial understanding to the board. She expressed some of her concerns with the budget including individual line-items in the budget. She noted that budgets can change.
- Dr. Eldridge noted that some of the monetary things such as salary increases aren't well thought out and would need to be reassessed moving forward. Dr. Eldridge reiterated that he sees the passion there but the area having so much competition it's difficult for him to have the passion mute out those concerns.
- Mr. Godbey expressed concerns on the structure of the schools and said there were some questions if half of their board became staff.
- Dr. Haire noted a time where one of the board members had business experience and asked if they could get performance/demand for schools in that area.
- Ms. Parlér asked about the survey and if they were from parents with school-age children. The Board said yes that 90% had school-age children.
- Dr. Haire asked Mr. Godbey about board members that would become staff and Mr. Godbey said the answer when asked was 3.
- Mr. Friend said that he sees the passion is there, but he says there are a few other things that he would recommend going back and re-writing their application and making it stronger. He and other board members discussed when they could come back and reapply (either via accelerated or standard applications).
- Dr. Danielsen said it is positive they have a facility but reiterated the lack of financial/business experience is making him concerned and making the board less robust.
- Mr. Machado noted he is going to vote with his heart and says that the strength of the board and the fact they have a facility, and small proposed population gives them a leg-ahead.

Motion: Mr. Dave Machado motioned to approve Bright Scholars' charter application

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Discussion:

- Ms. Haywood asked what is so different that compels them to a level beyond the competition in that area.
- Mr. Quigley reiterated that it's a very competitive area and that applicants really need to emulate Granite and use that as the baseline.

- Mr. Godbey said that he agrees but noted that Granite came back again and said that he thinks this board would be good to do the same thing.
- Dr. Danielsen said he's ok with letting a school into an area with a lot of competition, but he thinks that they are not able to actively compete enough in that area to win the competition.
- Dr. Haire said she does concur with Dave and reiterated some of the previous points that board members have said.
- Mr. Quigley stated he agrees the bar is difficult to discern but does feel there's a trend that shows schools with small enrollments have certain challenges and certain benefits.

Vote: Failed 3 :7

- Passed X Failed

Motion: Mr. Bruce Friend motioned to not approve Bright Scholars' charter application

Second: Dr. Bart Danielson

Discussion:

- Mr. Godbey said not to take it as a no, but to take it as a sign to do better.

Vote: 7 :3

- Passed Failed

Motion to Adjourn: Mr. Bruce Friend

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

3:20 pm

Minutes of the North Carolina Charter School Review Board

State Board Room 755, Department of Public Instruction

November 13, 2024

9 AM

Attendance – CSAB Members	
Alex Granados- (nonvoting) - Remote Dr. Rita Haire Dr. John Eldridge Alex Quigley Hilda Parlér Dr. Shelly Shope - Remote	Eric Sanchez - Absent Bruce Friend Dave Machado Todd Godbey Dr. Bartley Danielsen Stephen Gay - Remote
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Ashley Baquero, Director Joseph Letterio, Consultant - Remote Melanie Rackley, Consultant Jenna Cook, Consultant Dr. Natasha Norins, Consultant Dr. Brandi Gill, Consultant Nicky Niewinski, Asst. Director - Absent Julie Whetzel, Consultant Megan Carter, Consultant	<i>CSRБ Attorney</i> Steven Walker <i>SBE Attorney</i> Allison Schafer - Absent <i>Teacher/Principal of Year</i> Lee Haywood – TOY Sarena Fuller - POY

CSRБ November 13 Meeting Recording: [Day 2 - November NC Charter School Review Board - November 13, 2024 - YouTube](#)

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Bruce Friend, Board Chair

Mission and Ethics Statement:

- Mission and Ethics Statement, Mr. Bruce Friend, Board Chair
 - Mr. Machado recused from Cardinal Charter

Renewals 2025 Introduction and Data Review: Ms. Jenna Cook, OCS Consultant

Renewal Presentation and Interviews:

1. 92P Southern Wake Academy
 - a. Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and the leaders of the school. She presented comparability data and enrollment statistics over the last three years and noted they don't have any compliance issues at this time. She noted that this school – and others presenting today – are all in the 3-year category due to compliance and other issues. She went over the rest of the renewal interview timeline including the 5,7-, and 10-year renewals.

Presentation from the School

- The Board chairman introduced himself and the other board members/school leaders present. He went over the history of his school including when it opened and how they've expanded over the years. He touched on the values of the school and their mission to serve their students. He then went into the impact this is having on students and thanked the board for approving their mission statement change.
- Another school leader came up and gave a detailed look at the data highlighted by Ms. Cook. He touched on Performance Grades, Academic Achievement, and Growth data. He mentioned also that several subgroups saw significant growth such as black, and multiracial students.
- The school leader shared areas of growth and challenges to growing their school and went more into detail on the subpoints. He added they are having staffing troubles and that is contributing to some of the challenges they are facing.
 - He then went into a slide giving examples of success stories from teachers, staff, and students; and touched on the positive impacts of these success stories such as pride in the school from the students.
 - He mentioned that over the summer he had to not renew almost 1/3 of the teaching staff to increase the rigor of the curriculum. He said that he has since worked to get high quality staff hired and is working with parents to revamp other areas of the school.
- The Board chairman came up and requested a 7-year renewal, noting that his school does not fit the qualifications to meet a 10-year renewal. He justified the 7-year renewal request by using CHTR-007 and citing data from his school as proof they met those standards. He touched on other changes they have made over their last term that – he believes – sets their school apart and makes it an important part of the community.
- Another school leader came up and gave a closing remark, stated they look to stick to their school improvement plan and they strive to help their students succeed and thrive.

Questions / Discussion from the CSRБ

- Dr. Haire asked what explains the missing bars in the bar graph on slides 2-3 of their presentation. Ms. Cook said that it is most likely not there since they didn't have enough students in that subgroup to measure those students. Dr. Haire agreed with that point and commended them for the information they got from the site visit earlier this year. She asked if there has been any response on those recommendations.
 - The Board Chairman stated they have begun discussions on trainings needed and things they needed to do with the Office of Charter Schools. Dr. Haire asked if they have subscribed to the OCS newsletter and done other things such as gotten financial / governance trainings. A school leader stated they have hired a new financial group and they are going to give the board financial/governance training.
 - Dr. Haire asked again if they have subscribed to the newsletter and the Board Chair said no, he is not aware that they have.
- Ms. Parlér commented that the board makes sure they approve the minutes of the previous meeting as an action item on the agenda. The Board chair stated they approved those all over email and they didn't put it in the future meetings but noted Ms. Parlér's recommendation to have it noted in the agenda moving forward.

- Another board member came up and asked for more clarification. Ms. Parlér and this board member discussed which minutes were approved in the next month's meeting and which ones Ms. Parlér said she didn't see. The Board Chair also explained what happened in October.
 - Dr. Haire asked what the percentages for EC the past 3 years were. The Board Chair came up and gave those percentages.
 - Dr. Fuller asked to explain the reasoning to not renew 1/3 of the teachers, the percent of licensed teachers on staff and the onboarding process for the new teachers.
 - The school leader said that he did random classroom visits and used data from those visits to determine who needed to leave. He said that they are about 70% licensed teachers and that one of those teachers are creating PD opportunities for other new teachers.
 - Dr. Danielsen stated the school performs pretty close to the county in certain categories. He said it's hard to know how they perform across the board since it's difficult to determine how many of those students exist across the board; but, noted they are serving a unique community that they should acknowledge.
 - The Board Chair added that he is above Harnett County Schools but below performance level for Wake County Schools. Dr. Danielsen asked what percentage comes from Harnett County and the Board chair said 20-30%.
2. 93T Cardinal Charter Academy at Wendell Falls
- a. Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and the leaders of the school. She presented data and enrollment statistics over the last three years for the school and any compliance issues that were noted in their audits. She also touched on the fact they were on the CLP list and that this was their first renewal. She gave comparability data compared to Wake County and introduced the school's leaders.

Presentation from the School

- Ms. Porter from Charter School's USA came up and introduced the school leaders and board members present in-person and online. A school leader then came up and read the mission statement for the school.
- The Board Chair introduced herself and gave a brief overview of her time with the school. She said she's worked with a turnaround school and said what she's seen is very exciting. She said that she believes this is one of the best run schools she's seen.
- The principal of the school introduced herself and began the slideshow presentation. She said that from 2021-2022 they didn't have the leadership structures in place. She stated they worked tirelessly to get those systems in place and touched on the successes they had following this time. She said they were comparable in several categories, and they exceeded growth when the data is broken down further. She summarized the data further and noted how various groups went from not meeting growth to exceeding growth.
- The principal noted they are a Title 1 school and went into detail on the demographics of the school. She used this data to touch on improvements and future goals for other areas of the school such as Grants, Transportation and other student services. She again noted they are comparable to other schools that serve similar populations.

- She shared last year's growth scores and said they didn't meet the mark in 4th grade math. She stated they are working to improve those scores and went into more detail on the math and reading plans they're implementing for the future.
- She then transitioned into broad academic goals for all categories including a 60% proficiency in reading and 50% proficiency in math. She mentioned how she is constantly in classrooms, and they are currently going through staff/classroom assessments to see how things are going so far. She also touched on new courses they are expanding to K-8 students.
- She shared some challenges and other areas of opportunity for growth. She mentioned they look to improve on academic growth and continuing to hire licensed and strong teachers. She also said they strive to expand their footprint at community events and increase engagement with parents. She concluded by saying they were focused on academic growth, increasing extracurriculars and more.

Questions and Discussion from the CSRБ

- Mr. Friend commended their growth last year. He asked why enrollment is down from the last two years. The principal said they are working with expanding their marketing and that some parents have left because of the image the school has in the community.
- Mr. Friend asked how that has impacted the budget. The school principal said that she has worked with the finance team extensively and worked to make staffing more efficient without mitigating people. She also said they have an innovative model that allows them to be more flexible with the staffing.
- Mr. Godbey asked for the exact number of students. The school principal said 550.
 - Mr. Godbey asked what they're doing to address that decline. The principal said they are really striving to show the school has stability and they are currently working to market the fact they are growing well and they have re-instituted stability in the school.
- Dr. Haire commended them for their site visit. She asked what their average class size is, and the principal went through the averages for all grades served. Dr. Haire also commended them for completing other areas requested of them and asked if any board members have attended financial training. A board member acknowledged a financial training will take place sometime soon.
- Dr. Danielsen asked what percentage of students came from Wake County. The principal said she didn't know off the top of her head but that a majority was from Wake County.
- Dr. Shope congratulated them on the growth and said to keep up the good work.
- Ms. Parlér asked what would normally be on their 'consent agenda' and the principal explained what those items were. Ms. Parlér asked what she meant by 'bad reputation' and the principal said that when there's not stability and high turnover it echoes in the community. She then reiterated that she has worked to help stabilize the ship and market that to the parents and the community.

3. 93A Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School

- a. Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and the leaders of the school. She presented data and enrollment statistics over the last three years for the school and any compliance issues that were noted in their audits. She also touched on growth and performance data and noted they were comparable / meeting growth this year. She also noted there were some reports that were missing, and a testing coordinator was not going to be there for the rest of the year. She concluded by introducing the leaders of the school.

Presentation from the School

- Ms. Richardson introduced herself and the other members of the school leadership that were present in-person and online. She said that she would request – at minimum – a 3-year renewal or a 5-year renewal. She touched on where the school serves students and noted the data is trending in the right direction despite the fact they serve a predominantly rural and poor socio-economic community. She touched on academic data for subgroups and noted that math is a trouble-spot for some that is causing them to do targeted interventions. She said they are stronger in reading and other categories, and they are helping turn the school in the right direction.
 - She continued by saying that her Native American students saw significant growth and they have worked to curb transfers of students leaving to attend the public schools. She said that on average they are seeing consistent enrollment of 145-150 students and seeing growth when compared to districts / areas that have significantly more students.
 - She then touched on performance compared to the various counties they serve and noted again they are better in reading but lower in math.
 - She transitioned into details on areas of growth and improvement. She stated they have created a CTE class and are working with teachers every Friday to insure they are getting adequate training. She also touched on some of the other growth metrics, including involvement from the students in the community. She shared challenges the school is facing such as low socioeconomic status of the community and surrounding areas and teacher quality/retention. She also said that there was a lack of parental engagement and challenges in governance and the size of the instructional space.
 - She went into more detail on the CTE program and noted the number of students that are enrolled in the program. She concluded by going into detail on the support that students were receiving from the library and other community groups such as the Warren County Health Department. She added a note on other improvement areas touched on in their site visit and other curriculum modifications.

Questions and Discussion from the CSRБ

- Mr. Friend asked OCS why they received a 1-year renewal in 2015. Ms. Cook stated they don't know but she'd look into that. Ms. Baquero said that she doesn't know either, but she noticed it in other schools as well.
 - A board member said that in 2015 they had to make a transition to a 501c3 and that was what caused them to get a 1-year renewal as they worked that out.
- Mr. Friend asked if the board meets monthly and the Board chair said yes, they do. Mr. Friend noted that the minutes posted on the website are from 2023 and recommended posting those minutes.
 - Dr. Haire noted that was one of their recommendations in the site visit. The school leader and other board members said they were posted, but Mr. Friend said he didn't see them.

A board member said she'd check on them and that the website was under construction. She affirmed that she'd make sure they were there.

- Dr. Eldridge commented that there was a lot of pressure on this school to perform well considering that other schools in the area are also not seeing strong growth as well. Mr. Friend echoed this sentiment and added this would be the school's 4th 'minimum' renewal term. He said that the school really needed to get it together and the board really needed to look at things differently moving forward.
 - Ms. Richardson stated it is a fear of hers as well but said they are growing now that she has been able to be there for 3 years. Mr. Friend noted her sentiment but added this was something they said each time they came before the board for renewal.
 - Mr. Quigley added that he doesn't understand why they allow schools with continually low performing students and short-term charters to continue. He said that this school – despite the population they serve – is underperforming in a lot of the areas in the community. He said there is going to have to be a point where they are held to the ultimate accountability – revoking the charter. He recommended that the legislature makes changes to comparability data, so they are comparing to statewide data. He said that he is frustrated with schools coming and saying they are doing better / well when they are comparing their performance to an already low-performing area.
- Mr. Machado noted that he's concerned with the operational and academic issues noted throughout. He said that looking at the comparability data he is concerned and is scared to ask if these students would be better off somewhere else.
 - He asked how many seniors they graduated last year and Ms. Richardson said 14. Mr. Machado asked how many projected this year and she said 13. Mr. Machado said that they really should be able to do a lot of intense 'educating' and that he is concerned.
 - Ms. Richardson acknowledged those concerns and said that she again was not there for the years that was poor growth.
- Mr. Godbey asked what EDS population was and Ms. Richardson said 95%. Mr. Godbey asked what populations they served and number of students. Ms. Richardson said 90% Native American and 10% Black and mentioned the number of students enrolled (145).
 - Mr. Godbey asked about the testing concerns. Ms. Richardson said that the testing coordinator they hired had resigned and they didn't know about the missing deadlines until reaching out to DPI representatives.
 - Mr. Godbey asked what their current plan is regarding a testing coordinator. Ms. Richardson said they moved someone into that role and submitted all needed reports by the 5th of November. Mr. Godbey asked if she had training and Ms. Richardson said yes. She noted they are also training other staff as well.
- Mr. Quigley noted that this is a trend in schools that are continually low performing. But he again reiterated that they have seen this in the past, where a school promises to do better but in the end the data is the data. He said that it's difficult to address all the concerns at one time.
- Mr. Friend – citing data presented – asked how the 90% Native Americans are better off at their school. A Board member said their community is a unique community and the school is working to help build trust within, and it is needed to continue that building of trust.

4. 96C Dillard Academy

- a. Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and basic information about the school. She presented data and enrollment statistics over the last three years for the school and noted any compliance issues that were noted in their audits. She also highlighted performance scores and comparability data and introduced the board to begin their presentation.

Presentation from the School

- Ms. James – a board member – introduced herself and thanked the board for their time. She said that the board is compliant in all areas but is not proud of the fact they are here today due to low academic performance. She reiterated that they are committed to elevating that standard.
 - She went over the history of the school and noted the transiency of the population they serve.
- Ms. Baptiste introduced herself and began her presentation saying they are working to grow their academic performance. She said they are continually working to grow that performance and reiterated that they are compliant in all areas.
 - She touched on school and subgroup trends including comparability to academic subgroups in the surrounding community. She shared how they exceeded growth in other categories as well.
 - She continued by touching on some challenges they face including low EOG scores and chronic absenteeism. She mentioned some goals they had including to increase their NC report card grade.
 - She outlined some strategies they believe will help foster and grow student success such as teacher development, no cost tutoring, increased parental/community involvement, more extracurriculars, and the introduction of diagnostics/assessments to monitor success/proficiency. She went into detail on each of these strategies.
 - She noted that attendance rates have improved by almost 30% with some of the methods they've begun implementing.

Questions/Discussion from CSRБ Members

- Dr. Danielsen asked what students do if they continue to not come to school? Ms. Baptiste said they have revamped their attendance policies and emphasized they will not be promoted and students will be failed if they do not have extenuating circumstances after 20 days.
- Dr. Haire asked for specific data and the Ms. Baptiste said she'd get back to her.
- Ms. Parlér asked how often they do the chats with the parents and Ms. Baptiste stated they do those either virtual or in-person about once a month.
- Mr. Friend asked what the current enrollment is, and Ms. Baptiste said 249 and some had left due to the transient population they serve.
- Dr. Danielsen asked if they failed anyone last year for absenteeism and she said no but they had to go to summer school. She and Dr. Danielsen continued previous discussion on whether people knew the school was failing students for not showing up.
- Dr. Eldridge – citing the previous renewal interview – said they've had only minimum charter term renewals. He said that he and Mr. Machado discussed how they come initially saying that the surrounding schools are worse and then when they come back for renewal, they too are performing the same/worse than the surrounding community. He said the board needs to really look at this moving forward and encouraged boards applying to really think about what they are going to be doing differently than the schools around it.

- Dr. Fuller asked if the strategies of success have been done for the past 8 years. A school leader noted the difficulty in coming to a school that is low performing. She stated they have added vocabulary labs and other programs to help boost growth and this is being shown in the growth data. She also said they've done work to expand the school day and have fired teachers that didn't do well on their performance.
 - Dr. Danielsen – citing comparison data – noted that in the last 3 years they've seen swings in comparability to the district and hoped that they would go back to the years where they were doing well.
 - Dr. Haire asked about governance and what her role was in all that. Ms. Baptiste explained her roles and Dr. Haire discussed the 'interim' role title as well.
 - Dr. Haire asked if the Board Chair couldn't be here today, and Ms. James said their Executive Director passed away in June and these extenuating circumstances have posed great challenges to the school. She also mentioned they work tirelessly to explore every avenue possible before punishing/failing a student who hasn't attended classes.
 - Dr. Haire – citing the recommendations in the site visit – commended them for some areas but asked about trainings in governance. Ms. Baptiste explained some of the things they did for governance, and she and Dr. Haire went more in depth on points of their site visit recommendations.
 - Mr. Machado asked about percent of students who are military families. Ms. Baptiste said there's not a lot of families that are. Another school leader said that there is a lot of competition/other schools in Wayne County and that a lot of those military students go to those other schools.
 - Ms. Parlér asked when they'll get Pre-K back and Ms. Baptiste said that space requirements from the county restricted them from doing so.
5. 61K United Community School
- a. Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and basic information about the school. She presented data and enrollment statistics over the last three years for the school and noted any compliance issues that were noted in their audits. She also highlighted performance scores and comparability data and introduced the board to begin their presentation.

Presentation from the School

- Mr. Hall – Board Chair – introduced himself and the board members present. He mentioned that they have had sound financial audits.
- The Executive Director of the school introduced herself and gave a brief overview of the school. She touched on the fact they have met or exceeded growth in all years they've been open. She shared growth scores for different subjects and also mentioned some comparability data to CMS for reading.
- She touched on some adjustments to their leadership structure that helped increase accountability and curb attrition of teachers. Another board member came up to discuss not having a positive cash balance and said that a lot of money was spent on attempting to acquire land and a loss of ESSER Funds. He stated they used a lot of contingency funds to move their school and they had a lot of EC expenditures as well last year.
- The Executive Director touched on the large population of students that have high needs and the large number of students who are economically disadvantaged.

- She transitioned into success stories such as meeting or exceeding growth every year and strong performance in reading. She also noted there has been an effort to departmentalize their 3rd graders and that overall, there has been significant i-ready growth in reading and math.
- She shared comparability to schools that are in the same area and reiterated a previous point on strong financial audits. She asked for a 7-year renewal based on the comparability data to the local area. She then highlighted subgroup success and growth over the years.

Questions and Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Mr. Machado asked if they are in a new location. The Executive Director said they were looking to secure a new property; however they are still in the same location. They went over the history of where the school was located as well.
 - Mr. Machado asked how much they spent looking for a new property and a board member gave the exact figure.
 - Mr. Machado expressed frustration / concern over the lack of personnel adjustments after the ESSER Funding drew out.
 - Dr. Danielsen asked for more explanation on the departmentalization point. The Executive Director said that teachers were asking to teach subjects that they felt stronger in. She went more into detail how teachers were assigned/how classes were handled.
 - Mr. Friend citing the comparability data asked the office if he was reading the data wrong. Ms. Cook explained the data in front of him, as well as what type of data the school was using in their presentation.
 - Mr. Friend asked about the school minutes/transparency of the board's meetings saying that he hasn't seen any since March. The Board Chair acknowledged he failed to put them up and would do that soon.
 - Dr. Fuller asked what the population of EL students is, and the Executive Director said 28%. Dr. Fuller asked a question about their EC population and the Executive Director explained their EC population.
 - Dr. Eldridge applauded them for their growth and success and really encouraged them to push for that 'C' level.
 - Dr. Haire – acknowledging the site visit – asked if 3 of the other requirements were met. The Executive Director said they are going to monitor school grades on the website and said that 5/14 teachers were licensed last year and went more in detail on an event they had and benefits to teachers who received a license. Dr. Haire asked if the partnership with UNCC was continuing and if they've seen results from the program. The ED said yes and went more into detail on the program.
 - Dr. Haire then asked if they have done the financial training, and they said yes. Dr. Eldridge noted that test scores have been updated.
6. 65B Wilmington Preparatory Academy
- a. Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and basic information about the school. She presented data and enrollment statistics over the last three years for the school and noted any compliance issues that were noted in their audits. She also highlighted performance scores and comparability data and introduced the board to begin their presentation.

Presentation from the School

- Ms. Galloway – the Board Chair – introduced herself and the other leaders present at the meeting. She began her presentation by giving a history of the school and touching on growth/comparability data to the county. She also mentioned a statistic on early college enrollment over the course of their term.
- The school principal introduced himself and said his focus will be on the academic side of things since there are no other compliance issues. He began his presentation by highlighting Academic Comparability data and Academic Comparability to the EDS as well as growth data and EDS Growth. He then touched on comparability to other schools in the area that work with similar populations to them and noted they are higher than those schools.
 - He continued by sharing the school’s 2024-2025 Strategic Plan. He outlined goals for the school, an academic goal, a professional development goal, and a governance goal and elaborated more on each one.
 - He went into detail on other academic and professional development actions they have implemented and summarized the purpose and initial results from them. He concluded by discussing more on their goals for governance.
- Ms. Galloway concluded their presentation by explaining why they deserve a 5-year renewal rather than a 3-year renewal.

Questions and Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Dr. Eldridge – citing past renewals – said that schools should go for the renewal that they want and that the guidelines were laid out and clear. He and Mr. Godbey discussed what possibly might have happened since 2007 to have low-tier renewal terms.
- Dr. Danielsen asked what percent of students are black. The school principal said about 75%.
 - Dr. Danielsen and other board members discussed how a school might get evaluated if most of their population was of a certain demographic or if their mission statement/school’s charter said they would strive to serve a certain population. Mr. Friend concluded by saying there is not a particular rubric for schools that are serving a high minority population.
 - Mr. Machado noted they have taken this into consideration in the past. He also expressed concern that a school would change their charter just to make their data look better. He also said that he is frustrated that the schools today initially said ‘they would do better’. Instead, he said the focus needs to be shifted away from blaming the students to focusing on getting them better/ahead.
- Mr. Machado asked how many students, and the principal said 102. Mr. Machado said that with those small of class sizes they really should be able to do better.
- Mr. Quigley – citing the data – explained the growth data. He said that an argument can be made that it’s easier to exceed growth when a school brings in students that are behind because they have room to grow. He also asked if equaling the performance of the surrounding schools is the standard they are going for. He strongly urged the board to reassess things.
- Mr. Friend agreed with other board members. He elaborated more on previous points made by him and other members.
- Dr. Fuller gave a word of caution to really avoid driving their standards towards test results. She also explained that data itself cannot do the work and mentioned to look out for that if they want to hit the next benchmark.

- Dr. Haire – citing a comment made by the board – said that if they were meeting growth like they said they should be closing the gap. She asked if the principal could elaborate on the schedule for standard vs. extended and the principal explained it.
 - Dr. Haire also went over the points that were highlighted on the site visit and she and the principal highlighted solutions.
 - Dr. Haire asked how attendance was as well and the principal and her discussed this.
7. 65H Wilmington School of the Arts
- a. Ms. Jenna Cook introduced the school and basic information about the school. She presented data and enrollment statistics over the last three years for the school and noted any compliance issues that were noted in their audits. She also highlighted performance scores and comparability data and introduced the board to begin their presentation.

Presentation from the School

- The Executive Director (ED) introduced himself and the board members present in-person and online and outlined their roles. He began his presentation by giving an overview of the school itself and touched on some of the demographics they serve and resources they provide to students. He also stressed they serve a significantly large – and growing – EC population.
 - He continued by touching on comparability data and highlighted the large turnaround from previous years and how they are outperforming the district in some areas. He shared the large performance grade progression from an F-C and also touched on the large growth they had over the past few years. He said that all but one of his teachers have met growth in their EVAAS assessment.
 - He highlighted comparability data between zip codes and explained the significance of that data. He continued by explaining this large growth and increase in performance score was the third-grade group being with them for 4 years and the curriculum/teachers have helped them get there. He said that he also has a very low turnover rate at the school and that teachers received PD from the same trainer every year so there was continuity between the teachers.
 - He thanked the board and OCS for giving him a bunch of information on the several calls/board meetings that they've had in the past. He said he learned and was on almost every call to make sure they know how best to earn their charter. He mentioned they think they deserve more than a 3-year charter however understand the previous discussion and are grateful for being there.

Questions/Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Dr. Eldridge commended them for their growth and performance and said that if you keep doing that, you'll have no issue getting teachers to stay and their image in the community to be high. He and the board chair touched on their future goals and Dr. Eldridge thanked them for the work and said he doesn't doubt they'll get to a 70. The ED shouted out his staff and teachers who have done the work.
- Dr. Danielsen commented that their management team is quick to address problems that they see as opposed to waiting until next year. The ED confirmed this.

- Mr. Godbey asked how long he and the leadership team has been in charge, and the ED said 3 years.
- Mr. Machado reiterated the previous compliments and asked for more detail on the two campuses. The ED went into detail on what schools served which students.
 - He asked what the relationship between the ED and principal is and the ED said that he serves as the liaison between the school and the board but other than that their duties are pretty similar.
- Ms. Parlér asked if the board is involved in the day to day and the ED said that the Board Chair normally on-campus every day. He said that board members are constantly involved. Ms. Parlér asked about operations and the ED said there is a degree of separation due to his and the board's high respect for the leader (Ms. Caitlyn)
- Dr. Haire asked if/how a school gets off the CLP list and OCS clarified.

Introduction to 2024 Charter Application Interviews: Ms. Melanie Rackley, OCS Consultant

- Mr. Friend noted that they plan to put together a task force to discuss/look at comparability data to see how best they can look at things.

Legacy Traditional Schools; EMO Vertex Education- Standard, 2026

- Ms. Melanie Rackley introduced the Board of Directors to the School; as well as their mission, number of students, and other details pertaining to their application. She also introduced the choices the CSRБ had regarding this application and outlined the interview process since this school has a management company. She then gave a brief overview of the EMO and highlighted the typical due diligence for a charter board when working with an EMO/management company.

Presentation from the Board

- Ms. Broadway introduced herself and the other members present. She touched on her connection to the local community and the strength of her board. She mentioned the strong community support, multiple parent events, and an interest list of nearly 800 students. She also noted that the community did not have high quality schools/charter schools, and that report card data showed this. She also mentioned they have a site that is ready to build – cost refundable – and will be ready to open in 2026-2027. She complemented her board and said they have a plethora of experience to lead this school. She concluded her segment by mentioning that she has led a school in Arizona.
- Another board member came up and introduced herself and cited her experience as a staff member at Queens University and enrolling her child in a Charter School is what motivates her to serve on the board.
- The Finance Director introduced himself and gave his credentials/experience in the banking and finance industry.
- Another board member introduced himself and noted that his experience in Gaston County Schools will help the board. He said that his expertise is handling the EMO/Management Company.
- Another board member came up and introduced himself and gave why his connection to the community is incredibly important in handling the transportation and facilities section of the application.
- Another board member with extensive experience in public schools came up and introduced himself and gave his credentials.

Discussion / Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Dr. Eldridge asked why an EMO, and what is the EMO delivering and what is the structure.
 - Ms. Broadway stated there is a proven track record with the EMO and this partnership allows them to focus primarily on the children. She said she was a little on the fence initially until going out to Nevada to see what they do. She stated the EMO focuses on the small things and they – as a board – can focus on the school.
 - The Finance/EMO specialist outlined the fee structure and said that it could be lower dependent on Federal Grants received. They also discussed what the EMO does vs. what the Board does in areas like hiring and other operations.
- Mr. Friend asked if a Board Member lived in Forsyth County and the member clarified where he lived / declared his residency.
- Mr. Friend asked how the board came together and how they agreed to run the school together.
 - A board member noted that he found out Vertex was looking to open a school in Forsyth and that he started reaching out to others who might be interested. He said that he couldn't really speak on what motivated others to join the board. Mr. Friend asked specifically the board members who didn't live in Forsyth County and each of them came up and gave their 'why'.
 - Several of them touched on their relationship with Vertex and their concern initially, but after hearing about the team they put together they were excited to work on it.
 - Ms. Broadway came up and claimed responsibility for it saying her work with constituents and community leaders – coupled with her research on EMO's – resulted in them all meeting over Krispy Kreme and getting the ball rolling on this.
- Mr. Friend asked what the zip code for the proposed property is and a board member gave the zip code.
- Ms. Parlér asked that the registered agent is in Durham and asked how they connected with him. Ms. Broadway said they signed with him due to his legal experience. Another board member said he's not the actual legal counsel, but they will probably approve him to be their legal counsel later.
- Mr. Machado asked who will be employed by the school and Ms. Broadway said the only one employed by the EMO is the Superintendent. Mr. Machado asked about the clause that said if a vacancy exists for 5 days and Ms. Broadway said that they work with Vertex to hire/bring in a 'Perm Sub'. The proposed Superintendent of the School came up and gave more detail on this clause/position.
 - Mr. Machado asked if the EMO built the facility, and the finance team said that the option they're most leaning towards was a bond program that would give ownership to the schools in the Legacy network and not to the board / the EMO.
 - Mr. Machado asked for clarification, and they said the Legacy Schools of Arizona. Dr. Eldridge asked if they have a possibility to buy back and the finance team said that they hope to have that in the contract.
- Mr. Godbey noted that he didn't see any line items for mortgage / land in the budget. He and Dr. Haire noted it was in the contract but not in the budget provided. A member of the board said that the board would decide which option they wished to go and that's why they didn't specifically put it in the budget.
- Mr. Friend asked how they paid for the land/how it was purchased. Ms. Broadway said that it wasn't purchased but they have a contract that allows them to get a refund of their downpayment.
- Dr. Haire said she found the information conflicting in that the contract with Vertex has language that calls into question the ability for the board to oversee various areas of the land development. She and another board member went over the role of Vertex and the board in land acquisition and development.
- Mr. Quigley noted that he had a lot of questions about the budget. He asked what the board is getting for the \$1 million management fee. Ms. Broadway yielded to the finance team, and they outlined the work the EMO will be providing. Another board member came in and noted that he was on after the

application was submitted, but he has worked with the other board members to adjust the budget. Mr. Quigley gave a few specific examples of budget items he was concerned with. He also asked the board to really look at the \$1 million fee citing past discussions and conversations at previous meetings about management companies and their fees.

- The Finance team noted that most equipment was built into the building contracts based on his experience and that's why that budget is so low. He also reassured that the board would look at the services/role of the EMO and noted that teachers are looking for more administrative support.
- Dr. Eldridge reiterated that it is a lot easier to look at what the EMO is providing vs. what the school can do itself. Dr. Haire said that if the board has duly studied the relationship – based on the contract – they should be able to make that decision.
- Ms. Broadway said that if given the opportunity they will correct that and they – knowing the board – will probably meet tonight to fix these things.
- Ms. Parlér and Mr. Godbey noted some concerns about the AIG and EC staff in the budget. Ms. Broadway – citing her own experience – said they will adjust that accordingly as demand/need arises. Dr. Eldridge appreciated that but noted the board is looking at how they can run the charter based on the application they receive, and the applicant shouldn't be going into this with the mindset of fixing their application with the feedback they receive from the CSRБ.
- Mr. Friend asked about the counselor in the budget and the IT support person only being one person in year 5.
 - The proposed superintendent noted they apply for grants and they are working to get the resources needed (either a SRO or a counselor) for the students. Dr. Eldridge said that putting in there that they hope to / plan to replace that with a grant they can add or subtract certain positions. The Superintendent said yes and if the board needs to do so they can go back and discuss that.
- Dr. Haire asked about the instructional support for the school and said there may have been some confusion between that and the lack of operations support. She also recommended going in and making sure their student numbers were right in the excel sheet.
- Mr. Friend asked if they had a head of school in mind. Ms. Broadway said they do not but are actively seeking applications.
- Mr. Friend asked what the curriculum is and Ms. Broadway gave the curriculums for reading/ELA, science, and math. The superintendent also went more into detail on the training that they've received prior to beginning.
- Dr. Eldridge asked if the Superintendent will reside in NC and she said yes.
- Mr. Friend asked if there are any plans after grade 8, and Ms. Broadway stated they have discussed that but their focus initially is K-8. She said that she hopes to feed into a legacy school.
- Dr. Eldridge asked if Legacy Schools is an EMO, or a network of schools and Ms. Broadway said that it is a network of schools. He asked what the role Vertex will play in NC.
 - A rep from Vertex stated their focus is the proposal before the board today. He said that they've discussed long-term plans, but they initially want to focus on what's before the board today. He and Dr. Eldridge conversed further on this, and the Vertex rep stated they are committed to having / adding the staff needed to succeed. He and Dr. Eldridge again discussed future plans, and the Vertex rep stressed their focus is on this one school. The Superintendent gave her experience with both Legacy and Vertex and how it would benefit NC schools/students.
- Dr. Haire asked about the founder of the schools/EMO and if – since they are the same founder – if one goes with the other. The Rep for Vertex confirmed this.
- Mr. Machado asked how the Superintendent's salary is charged and the Rep for Vertex said it will be part of the 12% fee. Dr. Eldridge commented that should have been available it would have been better for the board to help advise the applicant board about the role between them and the EMO. Dr.

Eldridge and the Rep for the EMO discussed this further, and Dr. Eldridge stressed that it is important to know that the board is getting the charter not the EMO.

- Mr. Friend asked why they chose Vertex and Ms. Broadway said their time in Nevada is really what made them go with that EMO. She shared this is when the board really said that the light bulb switched on to convince them on how they were going to plan this out.
- Ms. Parlér asked if the fee would come from the gross revenues and not the net. The Rep for Vertex said it'll be gross but excluding grants. What type of grants was not clear between discussion of Mr. Friend and the Rep. Mr. Friend asked if money received from a grant would be 'taxed' at 12% and the Rep from Vertex said no.
- Dr. Eldridge asked about the Grant writing fee and Mr. Friend also asked if they would need to hire these grant writers through the EMO or through the board. Ms. Broadway said all hiring would go through the board. Mr. Friend noted that services – and hiring those services – are a lot different than hiring for staff. Ms. Broadway mentioned again the relationship between them and Vertex and said that any services that need to be procured would be communicated with Vertex.
- Dr. Eldridge asked who would get a particular service, Legacy or the EMO. The Finance team mentioned that it was consolidated into general needs but they would work between the board and Vertex on other things.
- The Finance team member explained how some schools in their network do things and how others do it. In the end, it was determined that it will be in the legacy budget

Closing Statement

- Mr. Crutchfield – a board member – gave closing remarks. He said that he was excited – pending approval – to join the legacy network and working with Vertex. He said Vertex has been very helpful but the board wants to take responsibility for the school. Citing Ms. Parlér's concerns, he said he would work closely with the Superintendent to address discrepancies like that one with Vertex. He said that he is excited about the plan for the facility. He concluded by saying he is appreciative of the CSRБ and cited his experience drafting the original charter school application.

Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Dr. Haire said that the board composition is something that challenges them on the front end due to the strength of the board. That, coupled with where the board members live, poses a challenge in really seeing the community wanting to get involved in this charter school.
- Dr. Fuller noted that some of the things that were mentioned as being done by the EMO is something that the school leader/superintendent needs to do.
- Dr. Haire went into detail on the curriculum and noted they didn't discuss that enough. She said it was a strong curriculum plan. Mr. Friend agreed and stated the leader needs to know that off the tip of their tongue. He acknowledged that budgets do change in the first year, but there shouldn't be concrete holes in the budget. He said that this is something the board might not know about, but Legacy should know about.
- Dr. Danielsen – citing the budget conversation – said that the board's choice with Legacy is a good one, saying they are good at helping underprivileged kids (Based on his research at Stanford).
- Ms. Parlér said that she was concerned about waiting on 'need for disability students. She stated that would be a good marketing tool to say that they serve all students.
- Dr. Eldridge said it looks like they're replicating Legacy and that the gaps/big surpluses might just be how they operate, and we didn't know that. He also said that the first year of a school is difficult and that it would be great to help but it's important to have those conversations with staff and get in the weeds – referencing Dr. Fuller's remarks.
- Mr. Friend said there's a lot of potential, but he said that he feels like he's wanting more. He and Dr. Eldridge discussed what bringing them back for a 2nd interview would entail.
- Dr. Eldridge went over the options before the board again.

Motion: Mr. Bruce Friend motioned to bring back Legacy Traditional School’s charter application for a 2nd interview

Second: Dr. Bart Danielsen

Discussion:

- Dr. Danielsen said they don’t bias/have any ill-will against schools coming in from out of state, but that it just requires more due diligence on their part since they don’t have as much information on them.
- Mr. Machado agreed and said that it was a very competent board that can run the school well. He said that – without Vertex – they might have had more confidence in approving today based on the strength of the board. He supports bringing them back for a 2nd interview.
- Mr. Friend reiterated past sentiments. Mr. Quigley said he was encouraged by the study and the success they had, and said he supports bringing them back.
- Dr. Eldridge explained the model one more time and said that bringing them back for a 2nd interview will help them address the other areas of that model.
- Dr. Haire said that she didn’t see a lot of the academic data in their support documents and would like that. Mr. Quigley and Dr. Eldridge agreed. Mr. Quigley said he’d like more detail on what that million dollars entails/will go to.

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

- Several Board members confirmed the dates for December and January and confirmed they would be back in January for their second interview.

Director’s Updates: Ms. Ashley Baquero, OCS Director

- No update at this time

Motion to Adjourn: Bruce Friend

2:48 pm